

The President's Daily Brief

18 September 1972

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~~*Top Secret*~~

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

18 September 1972

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Heavy fighting is under way in South Vietnam's Quang Ngai Province following a series of widespread Communist attacks over the weekend. (Page 1)

The Lebanese have ordered a new crackdown on the fedayeen in the wake of Israel's military incursions. (Page 2)

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Chile (Page 3)

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The latest Korean Red Cross talks were largely ceremonial, but further meetings are scheduled. (Page 4)

North Vietnamese troops in Laos have launched a series of ground attacks against government forces trying to advance along the western edge of the Plaine des Jarres. (Page 5)

Cambodian Army troops have ended the Communists' hold on Route 5 and traffic is expected to begin moving in about a week. (Page 5)

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Cypriot (Page 5)

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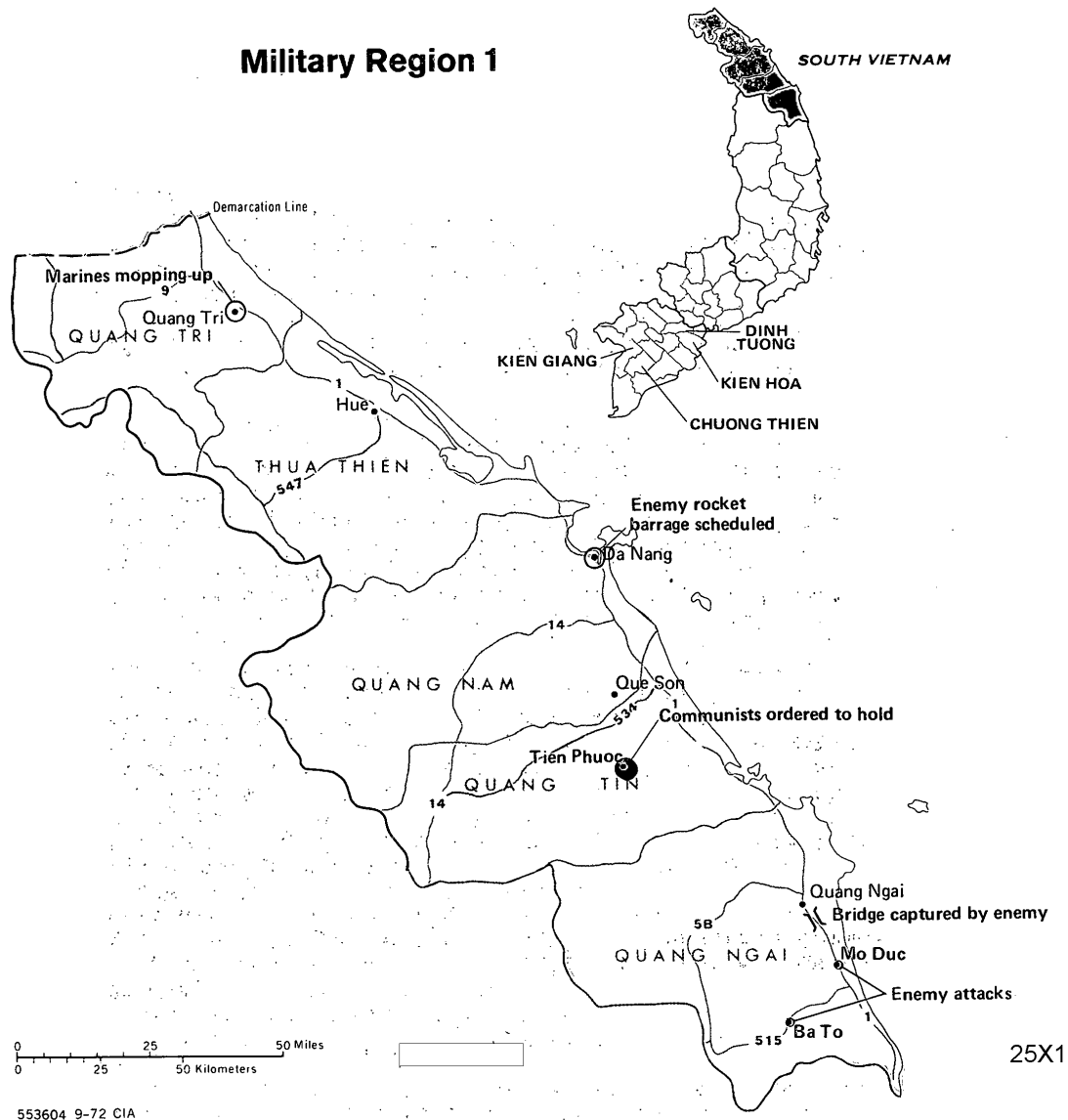
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A rebel force of Tanzanian-based Ugandans has launched an attack in an apparent attempt to exploit the deteriorating situation in Uganda. (Page 6)

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Military Region 1



*FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY***VIETNAM**

Heavy fighting is under way in coastal Quang Ngai Province following a series of widespread Communist attacks over the weekend. The main enemy effort is against Mo Duc and Ba To district capitals, but several government strongpoints have been either surrounded or captured. A key bridge on Route 1 north of Mo Duc has fallen to the enemy, blocking government efforts to move in reinforcements. Bad weather is hampering allied air support.

These attacks may be the start of a major Communist effort against the coastal lowlands. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] A prisoner recently captured near Que Son claimed that the North Vietnamese 711th Division would "coordinate" its campaign against the coastal areas of Quang Nam and Quang Tin provinces with a similar effort to be mounted by the North Vietnamese 2nd Division in Quang Ngai. According to intercepts, the 711th apparently has been ordered to hold Tien Phuoc in Quang Tin Province, possibly for use as a staging area for operations in the lowlands. Other intercepts disclose enemy plans for an imminent rocket barrage against Da Nang.

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Farther north in Quang Tri City, sporadic fighting continues as South Vietnamese Marines mop up the remaining enemy troops still scattered throughout the citadel. The Marines occupied the former provincial government buildings west of the fortress on 16 September. South Vietnamese Ranger units are encountering strong Communist resistance north of the city, but there was only light action to the south.

Fighting in the southern provinces remains focused on the lower delta provinces of Chuong Thien and Kien Giang. In Chuong Thien Province, the Communists harassed or attacked some 27 outposts during the past week. Recent Communist main force unit moves in Kien Hoa and Dinh Tuong provinces in the upper delta may presage renewed attacks there.

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LEBANON-ISRAEL

Early yesterday the Lebanese Government ordered the fedayeen from their strongholds in the Mount Hermon area in southern Lebanon and from the al-Biga area in the north central part of the country. Only certain elements will be allowed to carry arms outside of refugee camps. The commandos also have been ordered to evacuate all villages and to stop wearing uniforms. The Lebanese deputy chief of staff told US officials in Beirut that any resistance would be met by force and that the orders would be put into effect as soon as the Lebanese Army can regroup.

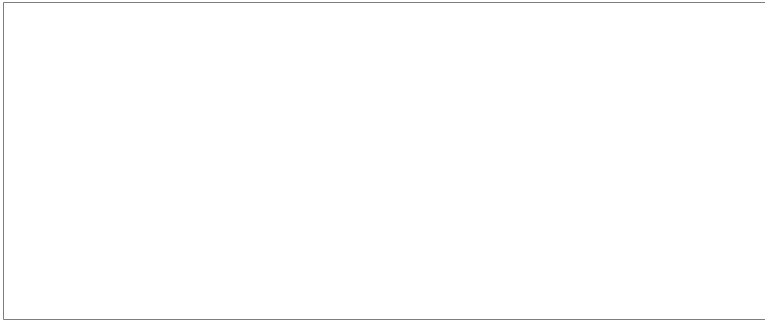
The Palestine Liberation Organization radio in Damascus quickly rejected the ultimatum.

The Lebanese Government has not had a good record in enforcing restrictions on the fedayeen, partly for internal political reasons and partly because of the support the fedayeen have received from other Arab countries. In any event, the army's ability completely to suppress the fedayeen is doubtful.

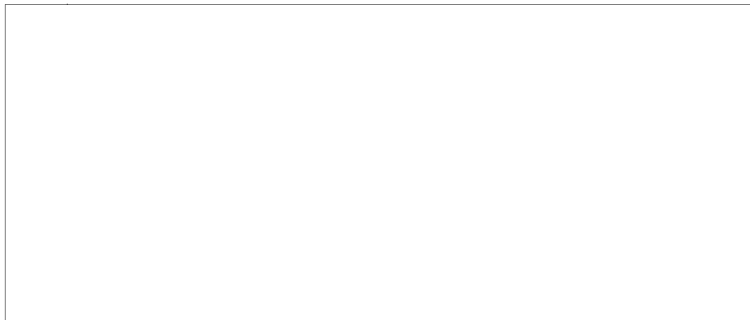
The Israelis say that all their forces have now been withdrawn. Failure of the Lebanese to act against the fedayeen, however, would likely result in new Israeli incursions. Israel's intention to continue operations against the fedayeen was shown in a statement by chief of staff General Elazar that the strike was "not merely a reprisal, but part of Israel's war against the saboteurs."

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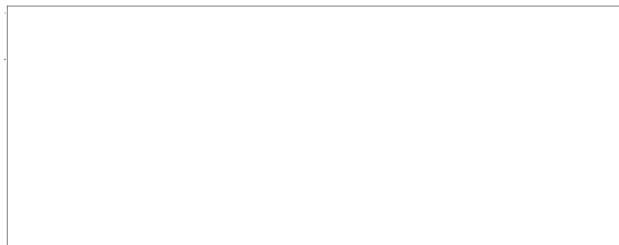
CHILE



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KOREA

The latest Red Cross talks on divided families wound up in Seoul on 16 September. The meetings were largely ceremonial, and both sides tacitly agreed to put off discussion of substantive issues until the next round to be held in Pyongyang on 24 October. This meeting will be followed by still another in Seoul on 22 November.

We expect efforts to work out arrangements for reuniting families and for cross-border travel and mail exchanges to be slow and painstaking. Nevertheless, both sides value the propaganda to be gained from a continuing dialogue and are, therefore, anxious to avoid an impasse.

Although the North Koreans have repeatedly sought to expand the Red Cross talks to cover other issues, Seoul has insisted that political problems be left to the Coordinating Committee that was called for in the communiqué of 4 July. This body has not yet begun to function and a decision to activate it is likely to be keyed to how things go in the Red Cross talks.




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NOTES

Laos: Over the weekend North Vietnamese troops launched a series of ground attacks against government forces trying to advance along the western edge of the Plaine des Jarres. Four irregular battalions that had been pushing toward the hills north of the Plaine were forced to retreat to their starting point. With the aid of air strikes, four other irregular battalions near the southwestern edge of the Plaine held their ground against attacking North Vietnamese. Irregulars briefly captured a hill near Tha Tam Bleung, but retreated after sustained shelling and ground fighting. Enemy attacks stymied the irregular force in the Khang Kho area.

Cambodia: Cambodian Army troops ended the Communists' month-long hold over Route 5 when they moved unopposed into the partially destroyed town of Ponley on Saturday. About a week will be required to restore several bridges destroyed or damaged by the withdrawing Communists and allow truck convoys again to carry rice from Battambang Province to Phnom Penh. The capital's rice reserves were considerably increased over the weekend when a special Mekong River convoy delivered 4,000 tons from the South Vietnamese.

Cyprus: 25X^{25X1}

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Uganda: A rebel force of Tanzanian-based Ugandans opposed to President Amin has launched an attack in an apparent attempt to exploit the deteriorating internal security situation. The rebels are evidently led by supporters of former president Obote, who has resided in Tanzania since being overthrown by Amin in 1971. The invading force has scored initial success in heavy fighting with the Ugandan Army, which has been seriously weakened in recent weeks by intertribal fighting. Major clashes have occurred 80 miles southwest of the capital, and Uganda radio reports the rebels have captured three villages. The invasion will worsen the position of foreigners--including approximately 1,000 Americans--whose safety has been jeopardized by Amin's recent xenophobic statements and actions.

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